

History Offers No Encouragement To Rancher's Capital Gains Battle

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MERTZON — The livestock herding associations had better stop making so much noise about the new tax proposal. Plans by the tax harvesters to keep rich folks from using the ranching games as a tax dodge ought to be left alone.

At the rate the ranch crisis is growing, we need a capital gains battle about as much as a zoo keeper needs an outbreak of cage doors being left open in the cat division.

A long time ago the Shortgrass Indians made a big fuss over losing their way of life. One of their chiefs, Satchel Shadow, came close to warring the great white father into listening to his native's problems. For a short time his attacks were so unwavering that a junior clerk in the Department of Indian Affairs considered taking the matter up with his supervisor. Senate pages became equally disturbed and at one time seriously thought about asking the hired help over in the House of Representatives if they had heard of any Indian grievances.

What was wrong was the basis of Satchel's argument. His hang-up, just like that of ranchers today, was saving his homeland. He was the land-lovingest old coot that ever lived. The tribal council couldn't get together for a congenial crow roast without Satchel Shadow interrupting the proceedings, blubbing over the beauty of the territory.

And once the lodge brew began to flow, the leaders knew they could count on Satchel to blab far into the night about the smell of rain-freshened earth and the sight of spring changing the countryside into vivid colors.

Making wampum off the land had nothing to do with old Satch's crusade. It was full-scale love of the limitless prairie lands that bugged him. This was not one of those late-evening seashore romances, but a never-weakening affair that knew no bounds. It was the type of adoration that has always destroyed man's reason, the fervor that has forever made him a slave to the object of his affection; an infatuation that would make present day uncensored movie scenes seem as cool as a formal garden party.

There was not doubt about it: Satchel Shadow was caught under the spell of the Shortgrass country.

You know what this netted Satchel and his radical followers. The great white fathers in Washington ended up giving all the Indians new addresses.

If the redmen had based their appeal on something more substantial than grief at losing their land, they might have won. But how could a busy congressman have been expected to comprehend that a bunch of near-wild-men loved their home grounds?

The same circumstance exist in our own times. Every time a new tax catastrophe is added to the forever-increasing tolls on private property, the herders begin to howl the age old tune: "They're gonna drive us off our land." And, as in the campaigns of Satchel Shadow, the blabbing goes on but the results are nil.

I do hope the ranchers will stay out of this newest fight. Losing capital gains tax benefits isn't going to be any worse than the other wrecks we're in.

I was always kind of glad that the carriage class was interested in our industry. Somebody ought to get some use out of it.